

What a joyful time it is when a baby is born! Both parents are overwhelmed by this precious gift of life from God. Tired smiles and warm support as the baby lies snuggled away, safe with his or her parents. Exodus 2 tells the story of the birth of a covenant child. Yet this normally joyous occasion is clouded over with fear. Israel was in a time of suffering and death. They were slaves in Egypt. Now all the baby boys who were born were to be killed in the Nile! If something did not change soon, they would all perish in Egypt.

As we had covered last week, this narrative does not take place in a peaceful time. What normally ought to be a joyful occasion: the birth of a son, is instead stressful and worrisome. The story unfolding is not pleasant. Pharaoh had given commands for all his people that whenever a son is born to the Hebrew nation, he was to be thrown into the Nile to drown.

This was a terrible decree. God's covenant people had come under the full and direct attack of the world around them. The people through whom God would fulfill his covenant promises to Abraham, and ultimately through whom our Lord and Saviour would come as the complete fulfillment of the blessing of Abraham to the world, were being threatened. Nothing less than the complete plan of salvation that God had for those whom he loves was being threatened!

Imagine living in a place where the very identity of your child is enough for the authorities to come and to take him away and kill him. What a bittersweet moment to realize that you are expecting! A gift of life from God, the giver of life, yet a gift that could so easily be swept away by an oppressive enemy.

But as we considered last week, the plans of God are far beyond the will of man, which is nothing but folly. And in the birth of Moses, we find an example of how the Lord in his wisdom turns the will of man upside down. The plans of man for children are as nothing compared to what the Lord will plan.

Exodus 2 tells us that the woman conceived and bore a son, and when she saw that he was a fine child, she hid him. This is a particularly interesting sentence. We read that a mother decided to try save her son because he was fine. But what mother doesn't think their child is the most beautiful baby to be found? The midwives were willing to risk their lives to save the children of others, how much more so for the very mother who gave birth! No, there is something greater at work here.

We find in Acts 7 Stephen's speech before the high priest, in which he also recounts this tale. He says that Moses was born and was "beautiful in God's sight." The author of Hebrews includes his parents in chapter 11, writing, "By faith Moses, when he was born, was hidden for three months by his parents, because they saw that the child was beautiful, and they were not afraid of the king's edict." There was a divine element, to Moses' birth. The word our Bible translates as "fine" here is the same word used in Genesis 1 to describe God's creation, what he saw was very "good." We can know that the Lord is telling his people that a new era of recreation had come. Their time of suffering would soon be over, for a deliverer has been born, and he would deliver them from Egypt.

We see in Exodus how the Lord preserves his deliverer. First, the mother gave birth to her son and hid him for three months. If the baby was found, the Egyptians would certainly take the boy away.

This would have been significantly more difficult for Moses' parents in Egypt than it might be for us today. Yet, by God's providence, they managed to keep Moses quiet enough to remain hidden for three months. As Moses grew, however, so did his voice. It was becoming clear that, despite their best intentions, their beloved baby boy would not be safe in their home any longer. What anxiety they must have experienced! Would their baby, kept in the home for a dozen weeks, only now be given up for death and thrown into the Nile?

But they came up with a clever plan. Pharaoh's decree would win out after all, but not without a caveat. Her baby would certainly end up in the Nile, but not to drown! She got a basket for him to lay in, and made it waterproof. The word for basket here is actually the same word used in Genesis to describe Noah's ark. This particular word, in fact, is only used in the Bible to describe Noah's ark and Moses' basket. Moses was kept from the waters of the Nile by floating safely in a little ark, just as Noah and his family were kept from the waters of the Flood by floating safely in a massive ark.

And what happened next is demonstration of God's will being enacted even despite the will of man. For Pharaoh's very attempts to destroy the people of Israel would provide the path for deliverance. His wicked program to end the line of Abraham would be obstructed by God, who used Pharaoh's own daughter to bring it about! A member of Pharaoh's own household would be the instrument for God's plan to draw this child out of the water.

Last week we had considered the folly of man is something that man will so readily continue down. That mankind will only harden himself in his own sinfulness, in his own rebellion. Even when faced with the prospect of blessing, man will reject it and strive to remove it from others. It is therefore a beautiful thing to see here that all of man's foolish plans count for nothing when the Lord is enacting his own plan.

This is a very important perspective to maintain when considering plans for the future. The plans of man mean nothing compared to the plans of the Lord. We can hear of the developments in the world. We can hear discouraging news.

But the plans of man are also in the hand of the Lord. And those plans of man will not stop him from delivering his people from bondage to sin into everlasting life. They will not prevent the gospel of salvation from being proclaimed. They will not prevent the children of God from growing in faith. We do not know what exactly the future holds, but we do know its outcome: the triumph of Christ in the redemption of his people. We see a glimpse of this ultimate outcome also in our text in the outcome for Moses. Moses is the only name given to a person in this narrative. Nobody besides the child is named, and here at the end of the text we find his name, a name given to him by the daughter of Pharaoh.

And what a name! Moses means drawn out. We see from the very beginning of his life, Moses is being prepared for and equipped to draw the people of Israel out of the iron fist of Pharaoh. Moses would be reminded that he was saved from death by his first adventure on the Nile every time his name was said. The very next narrative tells the story about how Moses attempted to help his fellow Israelite men, so it is clear he never forgot his origins. In time, Moses would live up to his name and be the instrument the Lord used to draw his people out of Egypt.

In the same way, we draw so much comfort from the name of our Lord Jesus! From birth, he is known as the one who would save his people. Jesus, our Saviour. He lived up to his name so much more than Moses, not acting before his time like Moses would, and not questioning the Lord, but submitting to his will. His final act of suffering on the cross, laying down his life, would prove the ultimate fulfilment of his name, giving complete salvation for all his people from their sins.

This is the hope we have! We have a deliverer who has saved us from sins, and have adopted us into the royal household to be the children of God! He has drawn us out of a world condemned to sin and has set us as his chosen people to live with him for ever and ever. Cling to Christ your deliverer and seek your name and identity in him! In him you are in the royal household and have been named Christians: called to imitate Christ. Thanks for listening